

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----102149Z 026179 /75

R 102059Z JUN 77
FM USMISSION NATO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4140
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NATO 05110

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO SECDEF FOR ASD/ISA,
CINCLANT, JCS USLOSACLANT, USNMR SHAPE, USCINCEUR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, NATO, PFOR, UK
SUBJECT: UK DEFENSE CUTS

REF: (A) LONDON 8894 (DTG 271722Z MAY 77)(NOTAL),
(B) 76 USNATO 6902 (DTG 171634Z DEC 76), (C) 76 USNATO
7009 (DTG 231704Z DEC 76)(NOTAL), (D) USNATO 0866
(DTG 151810Z FEB 77)(NOTAL), (E) STATE 131486
(DTG 080030Z JUN 77)(NOTAL), (F) MCM-62-76, DTD 2 SEP 76,
(G) MCM-34-77 (DTD 20 MAY 77), (H) 76 STATE 308870
(DTG 220116Z DEC 76), (I) LONDON 9500 (DTG 091721Z
JUN 77)(NOTAL).

SUMMARY: WE HAVE NOT YET HEARD FROM UK DELEGATION DETAILS
OF THE 230M POUND REDUCTION IN UK DEFENSE EXPENDITURES
FOR FY 1978/79 (REF A), DOUBTLESS FOR REASONS CITED
REF I. AS SOON AS WE DO, HOWEVER, THE ALLIANCE SHOULD
ACT QUICKLY, FIRST TO CONSULT THOROUGHLY ON THE CUTS,
AND THEN TO ASSESS THE CUMULATIVE IMPACT OF THESE AND
EARLIER CUTS ON BRITAIN'S DEFENSE POSTURE, AN APPROACH
THE BRITISH MAY OPPOSE. BUT WE THINK THESE STEPS
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IMPORTANT, SINCE:

-- NATO ADVICE ON UK INTENTIONS FOR 1978/79 MAY YIELD
INSIGHTS USEFUL TO THE UK IN TAKING FINAL DECISIONS
ON PROGRAMS TO BE AFFECTED;

-- NATO NEEDS TO KNOW WHERE GAPS IN THE ALLIED DEFENSE

POSTURE ARE DEVELOPING, SO THAT THEY CAN BE FILLED;

-- THE ESSENTIAL COLLEGIALITY OF NATO DEFENSE PLANNING NEEDS TO BE MAINTAINED THROUGH A WORKMANLIKE APPROACH TO ASSESSING REDUCTIONS, WHICH ONLY A CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT CAN YIELD; AND

-- THE OTHER ALLIES SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO THINK THAT REDUCTIONS WILL GO UNNOTICED BY THE ALLIANCE, AND ESPECIALLY BY THE UNITED STATES. END SUMMARY.

1. AS WE HAVE SAID BEFORE (REFS B THROUGH D), THE 230M POUND UK DEFENSE BUDGET CUT FOR FY 78/79 COMES ON TOP OF PREVIOUS CUTS OF 227M FOR THE SAME FISCAL YEAR, USING THE SAME PRICE BASE, AND PLACES THE UK EIGHT PERCENT BELOW THE LEVEL SET BY THE DEFENSE REVIEW, WHICH WAS SUPPOSED TO CUT ALL THE FAT. THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THESE DEVELOPMENTS ARE WELL UNDERSTOOD; BUT LESS CLEAR MAY BE THE PROBLEMS PRESENTED TO THE US AND THE ALLIANCE IF THE IMPACT OF SUCCESSIVE UK CUTS IS NOT CAREFULLY REVIEWED BY NATO.

2. IN ADMIRAL KIDD'S ADMIRABLE PHRASE, NATO COMMANDERS ARE "BEING NIBBLED TO DEATH BY A FLOCK OF DUCKS." THIS TREND, WE BELIEVE, MUST BE BRAKED, AND CONSULTATIONS AMONG ALLIES IN NATO ON DEFENSE PLANS CAN HELP. FIRST, THE ALLIES MAY BE IN A POSITION TO ASSIST THE UK IN DECIDING PRECISELY WHERE TO TAKE THE 1978/79 CUTS, AND CONSULTATIONS ON THESE CUTS SHOULD COME FIRST, WE BELIEVE. SECOND, AND MORE IMPORTANT, THE ALLIES

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SHOULD NOT LET THE UK AVOID THE CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT TO WHICH ITS MILREP HAS AGREED (PARA 3, REF F, AND PARA 4, REF G), AND WHICH WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY TOLD THE UK OUR AUTHORITIES FAVOR (PARA 3.C., REF H). IF THE UK CAN FIELD 100 PERCENT OF THE FORCES SET UP BY THE DEFENSE REVIEW ON 92 PERCENT OF THE MONEY, THE ALLIANCE SHOULD BE TOLD HOW. IF THE UK CANNOT, THE ALLIES SHOULD FIND OUT WHERE THE GAPS ARE, AND WORK WITH THE BRITISH ON WAYS TO FILL THEM.

3. FROM A NATO PERSPECTIVE, THE US CANNOT BE SEEN ACQUIESCING IN ANY OF THE CUTS WITHOUT A TUSSLE. THE UK AND THE FRG EACH SEE US AS TOO SOFT ON THE OTHER, AS THE REAL DEFENSE EXPENDITURES OF BOTH DECLINE. THUS, WE BELIEVE WE MUST CONTINUE TO BE SEEN QUESTIONING PROPOSALS FOR CUTS AND STUDYING THEIR IMPACT EVEN-HANDEDLY. FOR THE UK, SUCH EVEN-HANDEDNESS REQUIRES A CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT AFTER THE CONSULTATIONS ON THE FY 78/79 CUTS.

4. IF THE BRITISH RUN TRUE TO FORM, THEY WILL RESIST THIS BY SEVERAL MEANS, INCLUDING STAFF-LEVEL CONTACTS IN WASHINGTON. WE SUGGEST, THEREFORE, THAT WASHINGTON BE PREPARED TO POINT TO THE NEED FOR NATO REVIEW IF APPROCHED BY THE BRITISH AND THAT WE BE AUTHORIZED TO UNDERLINE TO SYG LUNS AND CMC ZEINER GUNDERSEN OUR INTEREST IN A CAREFUL NATO EXAMINATION OF THE CUTS AND THEIR

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 NATO 05110

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IMPLICATIONS. THE MILITARY COMMITTEE (PARA 3, REF F AND PARAS 4 AND 5, REF G) ALREADY HAS AGREED TO A SERIES OF ASSESSMENTS THAT WOULD (A) JUDGE THE CUMULATIVE EFFECT OF SUCCESSIVE UK REDUCTIONS AND (B) PRODUCE A WIDER ASSESSMENT TAKING ACCOUNT OF ALL DEFENSE CUTBACKS BY VARIOUS MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE IN THE PAST THREE YEARS. SUCH A SERIES OF ASSESSMENTS, TO BE UNDERTAKEN AFTER CONSULTATIONS ON THE FY 78/79 UK CUTS ARE COMPLETE, NEED NOT DETRACT, WE BELIEVE, FROM THE MAJOR EFFORT REQUIRED BY THE LONG-TERM DEFENSE PROGRAM; AT ANY RATE, THE IMPACT OF THESE ASSESSMENTS ON STAFF RESOURCES COULD BE EVALUATED WHEN RESULTS OF CONSULTATIONS ARE CLEAR.

5. USMILREP CONCURS. STREATOR

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